THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir as part of the ongoing process of review of the Export & Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of Commerce Notification No. 23 (RE-96) dated 10.2.1997, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library. As the notification has been recently issued, it would be difficult to make any assessment regarding annual duty likely to be earned by Government on account of import of these items or their impact on indigenous industry

Decline in Production and Export of Cashew

20. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are providing any assistance to the cashew producers in Kerala to boost Cashew export;

(b) if so, the total subsidy provided to cultivate cashew crops in Kerala during each of the last three years,

(c) whether there is any decline in exports of cashew products;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the remedial measures taken to boost exports during 1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development Programme on Cashew, Rs. 3.728 crores have been released during the last three years for activities related to planting; re-planting/rejenuvation; adoption of comprehensive production technology and plant protection.

(c) and (d). The exports of cashew during the last three years were as under:

Year	Value (Rs. in crores)
1993-94	1045.31
1994-95	1241.97
1995-96	1231.07
1996-97 (April-Nov.)	932.22
1995-96 (April-Nov.)	818.20

There was a marginal decline in export of cashew during 1995-96 due to sluggish international market and stiff competition faced from our overseas competitors. However, during the current year the export of chashew has shown an upward trend.

(e) Measures taken to enhance exprots of cashew include: participation in international fairs abroad; arranging Buyer-Seller Meets, publicity campaigns in the overseas markets and dissemination of information on quality requirements of the overseas buyers to Indian exporters.

Fire in Jharia Coalfield

21. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) the latest position in regard to meet the hazard of underground fire in the Jharia Coal belt of Bihar,

(b) the expenditure incurred on fire-fighting in this belt during each of the last three years;

(c) the number of fire-spots extinguished during the last three years, and

(d) the number of fire-spots still emiting fire and smoke?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Out of 70 fires identified in Jharia coalfield of Bihar at the time of nationalisation of coking coal mines in 1972, 10 fires have been completely extinguished. The remaining fires are by and large, under control.

With the objective of finding a long-term solution to the problem of Jharia coalfield fires, a detailed diagnostic study was undertaken under the Jharia Mine Fire Control Technical Assistance Project with World Bank Assistance. The study has been completed and report submitted recently.

(b) Year-wise expenditure on fire fighting including expenditure on the diagnostic study during the last three years has been as under:

Year	(Figures in crores) Total expenditure
1993-94	1.79
1994-95	6.02
1995-96	14.36

(c) Five fires in Jharia coalfield were extinguished during the years 1993-94 to 1995-96.

(d) Fire though under control still exists in 60 locations.

Production of Tea

22. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of tea gardens in the districts of North Dinajpur, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling of West Bengal; and

(b) the total gardens of tea being produced by the authorised and un-authorised tea gardens in above districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and